



## **STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS**

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

### **For Immediate Release**

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BHDDH Media Relations

### **RI Awarded Grant to Increase Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Behavioral Health Disorders**

Cranston, RI, January 24, 2011 – The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) is one of only nine states that has received an Employment Development Initiative (EDI) grant, for fiscal year 2012, from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Created by SAMHSA and its Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the initiative is designed to assist states with implementing activities to increase employment opportunities for individuals with mental health and/or substance use issues.

“This substantial grant will assist BHDDH in its important efforts to provide job opportunities and recovery services for Rhode Islanders with behavioral health issues,” Governor Chafee said. “I applaud the agency for its positive work in this area and am confident this grant will be put to good use on behalf of the Rhode Islanders who depend on BHDDH.”

“This grant will support BHDDH’s job development strategy for individuals with behavioral health issues,” says Craig Stenning, Director of BHDDH. “Our innovative approach will be to develop and combine SAMHSA’s evidence-based practice of Individual Placement and Support with certified peer wellness coaches to create employment opportunities for those served in the public behavioral health and recovery support systems.”

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Employment is a critical part of recovery for this population. As with any individual, employment results in increased self-esteem, self-worth and independence which lead to a better quality of life. The peer wellness coaches will specialize in employment-related services and work under the supervision of an employment specialist.

For those with mental health issues, employment support services will be provided at the Hillsgrove House in Warwick and the Harbor House in Providence. Individuals with substance use disorders will receive services at the Anchor Recovery Center in Pawtucket.

The \$103,000 grant covers one year. Goals for this grant include continued expansion of existing resources and services in order to transform the culture to a recovery-oriented system of care and to use this approach to establish a foundation for successful employment outcomes that can be replicated state-wide. An additional goal is to have at least 40 individuals employed by the end of the one-year period.

### **About the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals**

BHDDH is committed to assuring access to quality services and support for Rhode Islanders with developmental disabilities, mental health and substance abuse issues and chronic, long-term medical and psychiatric conditions. In addition to planning for the development of new services and prevention activities, the department's mission includes addressing the stigma attached to these disabilities.

### **About Individual Placement and Support**

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a vocational rehabilitation intervention for people with behavioral health issues. Employment specialists, who are part of a community mental health center team, provide services in the community. IPS emphasizes client preferences, rapid job finding, continuous assessment, competitive employment, integrated work settings, and follow-along supports. Initial research on IPS shows favorable results.

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